

Down Syndrome Tasmania

Welcome everyone to the 2015 AGM; I would like to acknowledge Jeremy Rockliffe, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Patron of DST and say thankyou on behalf of the DST committee for attending our AGM.

As you are all aware Down Syndrome Tasmania was formed in 1984 with the goal of supporting families of children with Down syndrome and helping these children to realise their full potential. This goal remains the focus of DST and is reflected in its vision for a fully inclusive society that embraces and supports people with Down syndrome as active participants

Membership of DST includes parents and guardians of children and adults with Down syndrome, professionals and others interested in the welfare of people with Down syndrome.

DST as an organisation undertakes many functions from advising the community of the positive role that people with Down syndrome can play within society (BrightStars is a shining example of this), advocating for people with Down syndrome within the community, to professional bodies (i.e. educational and vocational) Lobbying of Government (both local and Federal through DSA) for appropriate accommodation, recreation and support facilities including financial education and medical programs that will benefit people with Down syndrome.

Over the past 12 months the DST committee has maintained its momentum and continues to drive social activities for members, professional development opportunities for schools and others involved in educating our children. As well as focusing on increasing local membership, broadening network connections, and well as providing support and community awareness.

Recent data estimates that there are approximately 300 people living in Tasmania with Down syndrome and over 13,000 Australia wide.

Current membership statistics show 105 DST members and 191 people/organisations on the DST mailing list to receive information.

These facts alone provide members of the DST committee with the drive to ensure persons with Down syndrome have every opportunity to thrive and reach their potential.

What has DST delivered in the past 12 months?

- Family Camp No 8 – held in a relaxed atmosphere at Camp Clayton providing participants with lots of opportunity for networking, information sharing and socialising both on and off site
- Bright Stars Dance Troupes (located in the NW and South) continue to be in demand for performances across the State, raising awareness and providing opportunities for participants to grow and broaden horizons
- StepUp is held in the month of October a celebration of Down Syndrome Awareness week Walks are held in the North (Royal Park) and South (parliament Lawns). This year the weekend of the 10th and 11th October have been earmarked.
- Kylee Davie continues to provide representation on the Ministerial Taskforce for Disability Education as both a parent and DST committee member.
- Participation (along with the other states and territories) in strategic planning days for DSA.
- Support for the WDS day DVD production
- Provision of Education workshops providing professional development for teachers/ teachers aides and parents.
- Attendance at Governance Essentials Workshop
- Antidiscrimination training for committee members

Sustainability

- DST committee members continue to meet both face to face and teleconference (SKYPE) throughout the year.
- Representation on the DSA board
- DST Facebook page with regular updates and information sharing across the State including links to National/International pages

- Links to the DSA NDIS Facebook page (a closed group for DS members)
- Continued distribution of information i.e. new parent packs to hospitals and new families as well as visits from committee members.
- DSA Voice Magazine distribution to paid members
- NDS membership
- Working with children checks for all committee members/ dance instructors etc as part of our duty of care to members.
- Seeking and applying for grants many of which DST have been successful with.

On the Horizon:

1. SHAID - Specialist Healthcare for Adults with Intellectual Disability.

On the 14th of June at the DST committee meeting Dr Robyn Wallace gave an overview of the SHAID clinic that she runs out of Calvary in Hobart, with the view to starting a dedicated clinic for adults with Down syndrome, seeking support from DST with lobbying the government for financial assistance, supporting grant applications or possibly providing some form of financial assistance to help set up this clinic. Robyn was made aware that DST does not receive any financial assistance from government or other organisations and relies on donations and fundraising to support members. The DST committee of 2015/16 will provide support to Robyn in her endeavour of expanding the SHAID clinic.

2. Continued professional development workshops:

After the very successful Education Survey Launch by Rebecca Kelley in 2014 and a follow up teacher/teacher aide survey in early 2015, the need for professional development for teachers and teacher's aides was highlighted. DST was able to source and provide workshops across the State for teachers, aides and interested parents. Feedback was collected at these workshops providing DST with information on areas of interest to assist in designing future workshops.

Funding for services provision and capacity building is an area where DST will continue to lobby local government and support DSA with Federal lobbying to

ensure adequate financial assistance is available to organisations and individuals that provides services to our members. As well as continued advocacy and support for those with Down syndrome in the community.

Donations and fundraising

- MRA annual awareness ride funds
- TTL no days lost to injury
- Sausage Sizzle fundraisers at Bunning's across the state.

Acknowledgements:

- Meg Cooper – Young Achievers Award and Australia Day Young Citizen Award
- To the fabulous Debbie Kearns for all the wonderful admin support that keeps DST and the committee functioning.

As outgoing President of Down Syndrome Tasmania I believe that DST is on track and will continue to grow ensuring the best possible future and support for people with Down syndrome in Tasmania.